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## INFORMATION SERVICES

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## INTRODUCTION

The present paper succinctly presents scope, services, systems and resources of INFOTAB's Information Services. It stresses their functional and operational aspects, rather than the philosophical ones, in an attempt to respond to regular requests we receive from industry members. They usually involve storage and retrieval systems, and, in some cases, electronic communication possibilities.

Associations or companies operate in varying circumstances. Accordingly, the details they require may differ. We therefore suggest that this paper be considered as a basis for more personalised follow-up, where required.

As far as electronic access to our computerised data base is concerned, we suggest this be envisaged at the earliest beginning of 1984, in order to allow us to build up a truly useful base make sure the system is working smoothly.

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## I SCOPE AND SERVICES

### (a) PRIORITY ISSUES COVERED

The INFOTAB Information Services role is to act as:

1. An early warning system
2. A generator of processed information, analysis of issues and operational tasks for industry.
3. An international clearing-house on matters arising from smoking and health issues.

To fulfil this role, we collect, process and distribute information on action carried out by the tobacco industry around the world, as well as on the following priority areas:

- Taxation: policies and argumentation in political and industrial circles (we are also considering establishing a database of comparative tax levels around the world).
- "Passive" and Public Smoking: scientific and political information and details of voluntary and imposed restrictions.
- Economics: economic impact of the tobacco industry, including agricultural, employment, fiscal, technological contribution, alleged social "cost", etc.
- Promotion/advertising/sponsorship: government policies, argumentation and details of voluntary and imposed restrictions.
- Issues related to less developed countries: re-afforestation, relationship between leaf growing and food crops, etc..
- Audio-visual material produced by INFOTAB or other industry sources

This list of priorities is not considered exhaustive, but provides an operational framework for the system. Any newly arising issue or area can be added.

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(b) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND OTHER SERVICES

We distribute information and operational material of two sorts. Unsolicited mailings and regular publications, and information in response to specific requests. The INFO-series of publications, for example, provides regular up-date on published literature, industry action and meetings/events dealing with smoking related subjects.

Individual mailings cover specific subjects, ranging from the supply of background material, such as briefing papers, to the proposal of strategies, such as the dissemination of material to contacts outside the industry.

We have also developed a number of reference documents covering specific subjects, such as a summary of promotion and public smoking restrictions, and a guide to industry action.

Finally, we deal with specific requests from our contacts within, and allied to the industry

1. INFO-series

a. Infotopics

This monthly publication presents abstracts of published material directly or indirectly related to smoking issues.

b. Infodate

INFODATE is an ad hoc publication which summarises observers' reports on meetings and events dealing with smoking issues.

c. Infogram

This is produced on an ad hoc basis and contains concise reports of actions carried out by NMAs or Lead Companies.

d. Other Info-bulletins

Infobrief providing readers with more detailed analyses and trends of specific issues, will be initiated during the first half of 1983.

In addition a "Newsletter" will provide prompt and succinct information on smoking related issues from around the world.

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## 2. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### a. "Industry in Action" Binder

We compiled succinct case histories of industry activities effected over the period 1980 - Autumn 1982 and published in the "Industry in Action" binder. This will be up-dated on an annual basis, with case histories of actions which will initially be reported in INFOGRAM.

### b. Smoking Issues Status Book (SISB)

The SISB provides a handy reference guide to voluntary and imposed regulations on marketing and public smoking. The first version was produced in 1981. We distributed an expanded version in Autumn 1982 and will circulate regular update sheets when a change occurs. By the end of 1983, all regions will be covered by this document.

## 3. RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC REQUESTS

Material is also supplied in response to specific requests from industry sources.

NMAs, Lead Companies and Member Companies, as well as consultants who co-operate in project work, call on our Information Services for information on a wide variety of queries.

Information Services presently responds to an average of sixteen such requests each month. These range from requests for hard copy material to in-depth analyses of given subjects (e.g. advertising/consumption, taxation levels/consumption, legislation) and useful argumentation.

## 4. OTHER MATERIAL

Other material produced by INFOTAB is distributed ad hoc, for example:

- EIU study on tobacco leaf and its impact on national economies, and suggestions on strategy
- CATAC brochures, and suggestions on use
- Background briefing papers, etc.

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## II SYSTEM

### (a) DOCUMENTATION - SELECTION AND SOURCES

The following general rules guide selection of documents which are collected, analysed and stored:

1. Concentrate on priority areas as defined
2. Co-ordinate with other tobacco industry sources in order to avoid duplication, as much as possible
3. Exclude historic material (prior to 1980) except for "landmark" and "core collection" items on specific issues.

In building up the core collections, existing industry and allied sources have been most helpful.

For general up-dating we can presently rely on:

- the tobacco industry itself, NMAs, Lead Companies and other Member Companies to supply constant input of relevant material, through their publications and correspondence.
- a network of specialised outside sources which provides material and information on relevant literature, international events and organisations.
- regular receipt of some 100 periodical titles which are scanned in-house for relevant literature.

A link up with commercial data bases is planned, to be implemented in the course of 1983, in view of accessing a broader range of subjects when needed.

### (b) STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM (SOFTWARE)

We have a dual storage system: all publicly accessible documents are abstracted and put on computer; other non-published material is kept in manual files.

By the end of 1982, some 1600 published documents were collected. These are either on computer or in the process of preparation for input onto computer. This involves compiling an abstract of the document and selecting a number of keywords necessary to characterise its content. The STAIRS (Storage And Information Retrieval System) Software used allows for ANY word in the data base to be used as a keyword for retrieval. However, to ensure high consistency of terminology, and consequently a high level of relevance in retrieval, a special section on the input sheet is dedicated to keywords. (A keyword list is available on request).

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Secretariat papers and any unpublished material are filed in a limited number of manual files.

Computerised material is retrieved according to the keyword system, and the full documents are filed in simple numerical order. The computerised input sheet carries as many keywords as relevant areas covered by the related document. At the searcher's request the data base is scanned for any one of the keywords recorded. Selection is narrowed down by the input of additional keywords.

In order to facilitate filing for those recipients with a manual storage system, INFOTOPICS has been designed according to a list of headings and sub-headings (see attachment to INFOTOPICS January 1983).

### III RESOURCES

#### (a) EQUIPMENT

Following a comparative cost/benefit analysis of manual vs. computerised storage and retrieval system, it was decided to set-up a semi-computerised system. Criteria for the equipment were defined as follows:

- to be user-orientated (no in-house computer, nor computer specialist)
- to be cost-efficient (no in-house computer - you pay as you use it)
- to be integrated i.e. to extend beyond documentation storage and retrieval to secretarial tasks (data and word processing)
- to be capable of adaptation to future expansion (flexible software)
- to be suitable for future telecommunication links and therefore assume highest possible overall compatibility, either for access by industry to INFOTAB database or for INFOTAB's access to outside databases.
- to be capable for future communication links between INFOTAB word processors and outside word processors.

In a comparative data/word processing systems analysis, the IBM time-share computer system, combined with STAIRS Software and their word processors "Display Writers", appeared to be the most satisfactory choice.

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Presently our data and word processing equipment consists of:

4 word processors, of which:

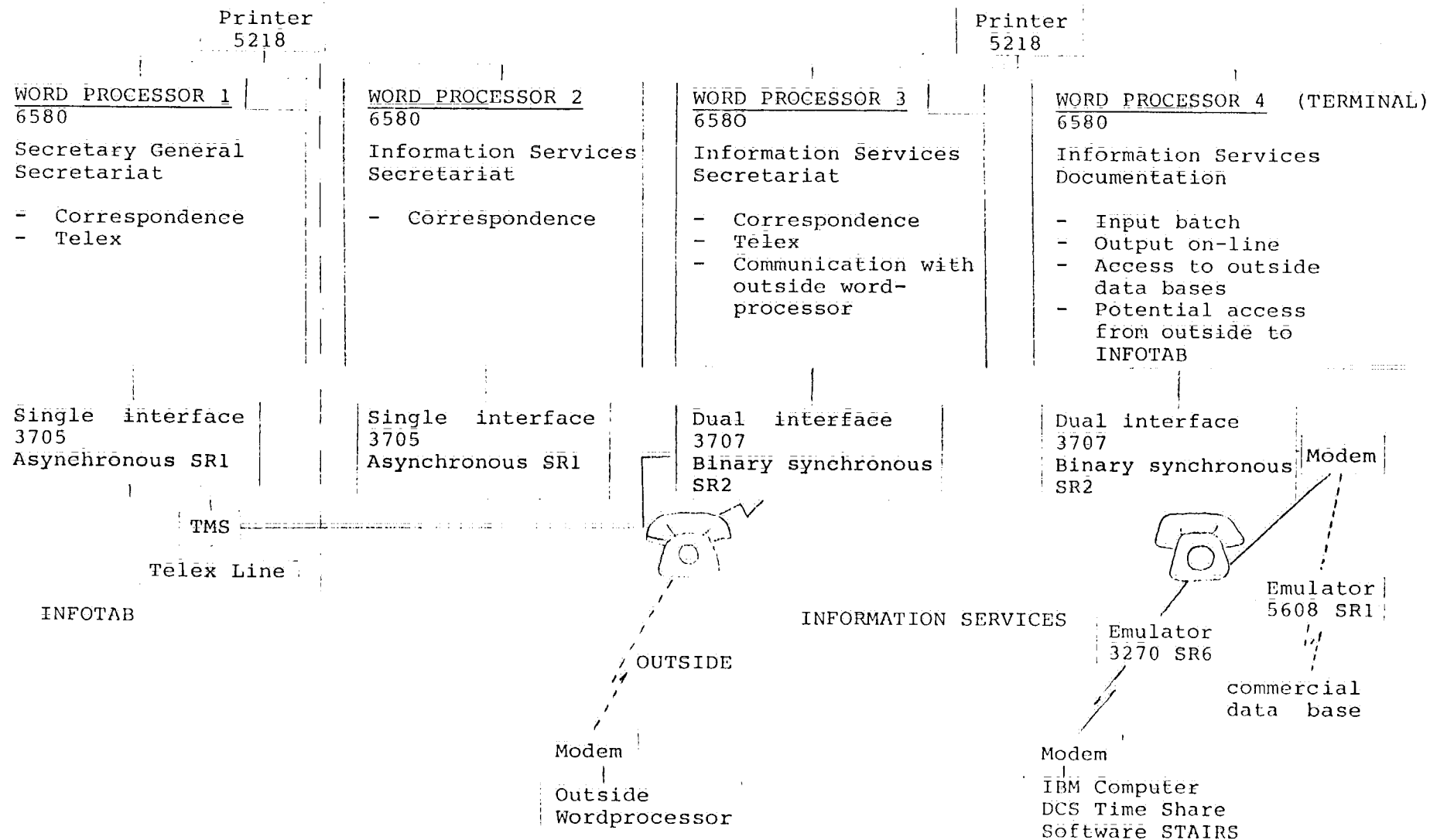
- 2 are used by the Information Services Secretariat
- 1 is part of the Documentation Centre (part of Information Services) and operates as an input device for storage on computer in batch. By March 1983, it will also operate as a terminal for retrieval of computerised information.
- 1 is in use in the General Secretariat by the Secretary to the Secretary General

N.B. 1) The word processors are equipped with modems and emulators for varying functions besides their primary one as a typewriter. This is shown in the following diagram.

2) No in-house computer is needed as we access a time-share IBM computer.

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EQUIPMENT: Technical Specifications

IBM DISPLAYWRITERS

a) hardware

Electronics Module 256K (6580)

Display (3300)

Keyboard Azerty (5337)

Single Interface (3705)

Dual Interface (3707)

Dual Interface (3707)

b) software

Textpack 4 5608 TR4

Asynchronous 5608 SR1

Binary Synchronous 5608 SR2

3270 Emulator 5608 SR6

(b) COMMUNICATION POSSIBILITIES

This system allows at present for:

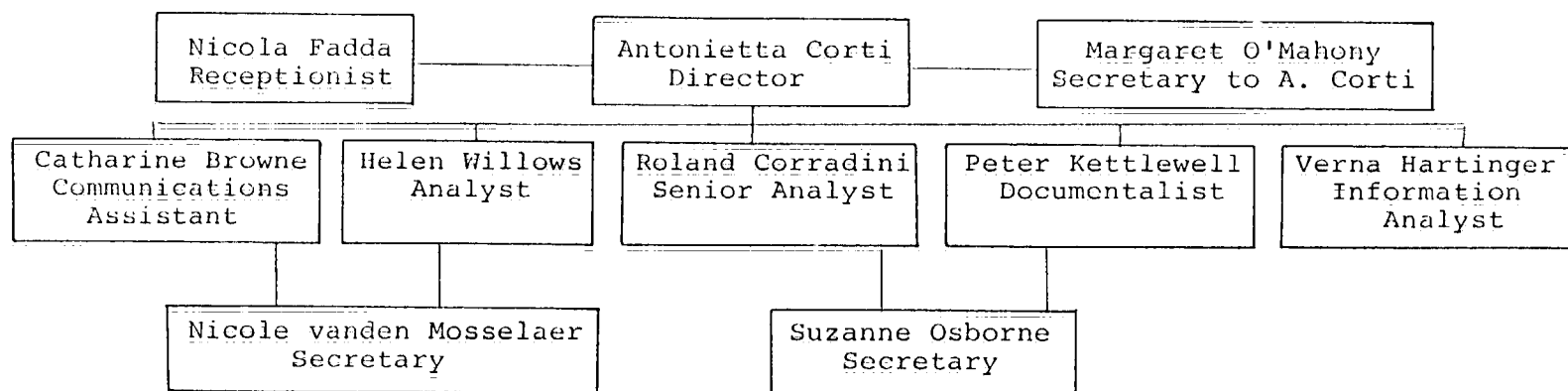
- Access through a word processor ("DISPLAYWRITER") to INFOTAB data held in data base at IBM on a time-share facility.

and potential:

- access to outside data bases
- communication between INFOTAB and outside DISPLAYWRITERS
- access to INFOTAB data base by industry circles

(c) HUMAN RESOURCES

As from 15th February 1983, Information Services will comprise ten people. These are the Director and her secretary; three people (two analysts and a communications assistant) who are in charge of project work, the handling of specific requests, the analysis, computing and publication of information. The information analyst, who abstracts and keywords documents to be put on computer also checks translations. One documentalist two secretaries and the receptionist.



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